

Appl. No. 09/616,531  
Amdt. dated March 8, 2004  
Reply to Office Action of Sept. 8, 2004

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

The present amendment is submitted in an earnest effort to advance the case to issue without delay.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating Claims 1 – 8, 15 and 17 – 21 as being allowed. Claims 12, 25 – 27, 29, 30, 36 and 42 were said by the Examiner to be allowable if rewritten in independent form having all the limitations of the base claims. The Examiner is thanked for this provisional allowability.

Independent Claim 9 has been amended to incorporate the elements of provisionally allowable Claim 12. Independent Claim 24 has been amended by incorporation of provisionally allowable Claim 25. Independent Claim 33 has been amended by incorporating the elements of provisionally allowable Claim 36. Finally, independent Claim 41 has been amended by incorporating provisionally allowable Claim 42. Independent Claim 47 and its dependent Claim 48 have been cancelled.

In view of the foregoing amendment, Applicant believes the claims are now in condition for allowance and such action is herewith requested.

Dated: March 8, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited on the date shown below with the U.S. Postal Service, via first class mail, in an envelope addressed to:  
Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, Mail  
Stop Amendment.

  
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**BERNARD MALINA**

  
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**DATE**